



THE RALEIGH ARTS COMMISSION, established in 1977 as the official advisory body and advocate for the arts to the Raleigh City Council, proudly holds the distinction of being the first municipal arts commission created in North Carolina. Serving as the leading force to champion the arts with Raleigh citizens and their representatives, the Commission's myriad activities foster, support, and promote the arts in the Capital City.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

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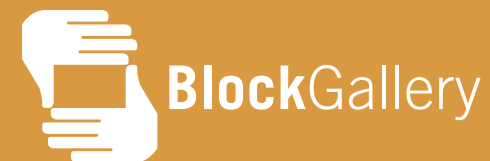
Proudly celebrating **25** years connecting local artists to community through ongoing exhibitions and public outreach!

BLOCK GALLERY • Municipal Building Art Exhibitions
222 West Hargett Street • Raleigh, NC 27601
919.996.3610 • www.raleighnc.gov/arts



Southern Vernacular

April 2 - May 18, 2009



Clifton Dowell and
The North Carolina Language and Life Project
Celebrating **25** years of local art!



Clifton Dowell, *Jessie Jr., Race Car Driver, Wake County Speedway, 2007*

Images, front cover, left to right: Clifton Dowell, *Race Car Driver, Wake County Speedway*; Charlotte Vaughn (NCLLP), *Arel*; Clifton Dowell, *Concession Workers, Wake County Speedway*; Drew Grimes (NCLLP), *George Higgs*.

It's the slow and elegant sound of your grandmother's Southern drawl, the sight of speeding cars at the racetrack, the smell of saltwater on your uncle's pier. Or perhaps your cherished memories reside far from here, lodged in another region's sounds, sights, and scents.

Both Clifton Dowell and the North Carolina Language and Life Project capture these disappearing voices and traditions, documenting the uniqueness of life in the South.

Southern Vernacular reveals a complex, vivid portrait of our region - a place in motion, with deep roots and new beginnings.

Sarah Blackmon, Block Gallery Coordinator

Southern Vernacular

**Clifton Dowell and
The North Carolina Language and Life Project**

**Reception for *Southern Vernacular* honoring
Piedmont Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green
in celebration of National Poetry Month:
Thursday, April 2, 2009, 5 - 7 p.m.**



BlockGallery

Connecting local artists to community through ongoing exhibitions and public outreach since 1984.

CLIFTON DOWELL



I try to make photographs that interest me personally and that are honest, direct and unsentimental. I take inspiration from the work of August Sander and Eugéne Atget, and believe a primary goal of documentary photography is to create bodies of work that prove useful to future generations without depending upon a sense of nostalgia.

Clifton Dowell's documentary photography concerns itself with communities of interest, exploring the bonds and connections that exist between people engaged in common pursuit, as well as the places that draw them together. For almost a decade, Dowell has explored the visual character of Raleigh's Depot District, a contemporary commercial neighborhood that finds its future once again linked to the railroad tracks that gave it birth. In 2007, Dowell documented a season of short track racing at Wake County Speedway, a non-sanctioned, "outlaw" track where generations of families come together to make their own fun. The racing is close, loud and contentious -- a non-corporate, community-based entertainment in the vernacular of the American South.

Dowell became interested in photography when a box of black and white negatives from the 1940s was passed down to him. He is a former member of Antfarm Studios, an artists' collective in Raleigh. Also a journalist, Dowell holds a B.A. in English from UNC-Chapel Hill and a certificate in documentary studies from Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies. His photography exhibits include: *Short Track: Photographs from the Asphalt Oval*, University Gallery, Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies; and *Our Streets: Documenting Our Evolving Landscape*, Duke University, companion exhibit to *Dream Street: W. Eugene Smith's Pittsburgh Photographs*.

CLIFTON DOWELL

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Unless notated, archival inkjet prints on cotton paper, 12" x 12."

Framed: \$250 / Unframed: \$130

Title and Date of Work

Wake County Speedway Series

- *Jessie Richardson Jr., Race Car Driver*; 2007
- *Justin Reavis, Race Team Crew Member*; 2007
- *Aaron Pacitti, Race Car Driver's Son*; 2007
- *Concession Stand Workers*; 2007
- *Rodney "No Hand King" Hines, Stunt Bicyclist*; 2007
- *Zach Messer, Concession Stand Worker*; 2007
- *Tony and Krystal Cooper, Race Car Drivers*; 2007
- *Wrecker Driver Dennis "D.J." Underwood, Jr. with Stepson, Michael*; 2007
- *Michael McGann, Spectator, Between Turns One and Two*; 2007
- *Team Members at Work on Carburetor of Race Car*; 2007
- *Spectators at Private Practice Session*; 2007

The Depot District Series

- *Luva Zachary, Co-Proprietor, Tattoo Parlor and Eclectic Gift Shop*; 2007
- *Chris Rust, Proprietor, Screen Printing Shop*; 2006
- *Brick Wall with Yellow Door*; 2005
- *Board Fence*; 2005
- *Falling Wall with Plants, Raleigh*; 2005
- *Tree in Parking Lot, Graffiti, South Dawson & West Hargett Streets*; 2005
- *Sales Area, Boyette's Automotive*; 2005
- *Second Story Storage, Former Furniture Manufacturing Building*; 2006
- *Notice to Patrons, Free-Weight Gym*; 2005
- *Artist's Work Desk, Tattoo Parlor and Eclectic Gift Shop*; 2007
- *Picture Frames, Former Furniture Manufacturing Building*; 2006
- *Berkely Cafe, West Martin Street*; 2001
- *Dillon Supply Company Building*; 2002 (10" x 15.5")
- *Warehouse Loading Door*; 2001 (10" x 15.5")
- *Engine Block, Boyette's Automotive*; 2005 (10" x 15.5")

JAKI SHELTON GREEN

*Purpose
By Jaki Shelton Green*

*i am new
poem
i am new
woman
writing
poems
about life
about thunder
and about
fading dreams
i am new
poem
real new poem
fragments of black juju tales
fragments of seaweed
and dust
i am new poem
skipping and flying
giving life
leaving no marks.*

Printed with permission of author.

“There are poets that live in North Carolina and then there are poets that personify North Carolina. Jaki Shelton Green is one of those poets whose words embody the land, the culture, and the people.”

Glenis Redmond, Poet

The Piedmont Laureate program, co-sponsored by the City of Raleigh Arts Commission, Durham Arts Council, Orange County Arts Commission, and United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County, has, as its primary goal: “to promote awareness and heighten appreciation for excellence in the literary arts in the Piedmont region.” The program is dedicated to building a literary bridge for residents to come together and celebrate the art of writing, enriching the lives of all our citizens. Poet Jaki Shelton Green was selected to serve as the program’s first laureate (through 2009).

PIEDMONT



LAUREATE

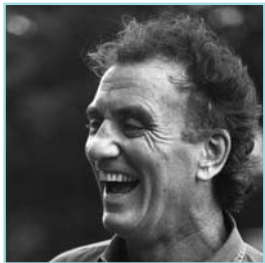
2009 POET



Jaki Shelton Green, 2009 Piedmont Laureate, has received a variety of awards and honors for her work, including the North Carolina Award for Literature (2003), Artist-in-Residence at The Taller Portobelo Artist Colony in Panama, and the 2007 Sam Ragan Award. Her poetry has appeared in publications such as *The Crucible*, *The African-American Review*, *Obsidian*, *Ms. Magazine*, *Essence Magazine*, and *The Pedestal Magazine*.

Her publications (Carolina Wren Press) include *Dead on Arrival*, *Dead on Arrival and New Poems*, *Masks*, *Conjure Blues*, *singing a tree into dance*, *Blue Opal* (a play), and *breath of the song* (which was cited as one of the two *Best Poetry Books of the Year* by the *Independent Weekly*). Green is a creativity coach and writing instructor who has conducted workshops and presented readings throughout the U.S., Europe, Caribbean Islands, Central and South America.

THE NORTH CAROLINA LIFE AND LANGUAGE PROJECT



Walt Wolfram



Neal Hutcheson

The North Carolina Language and Life Project (NCLLP) was established at North Carolina State University in 1993 to focus on research, graduate and undergraduate education, and outreach programs related to language in the American South. Since its inception, the staff of the NCLLP has conducted more than 1500 sociolinguistic interviews with residents of North Carolina and other regions. Interviews cover a wide range of topics, from history and remembrances to current livelihood and lifestyle changes.

NCLLP is led by Walt Wolfram, a William C. Friday Distinguished Professor of English at NCSU, and Neal Hutcheson, the project's videographer. Hutcheson's production and directorial credits include *Mountain Talk* (2004), *Voices of North Carolina* (2005), and *Carolina Brogue* (2008).



Photo by Drew Grimes

George Higgs, Edgecombe County

George was born in a small farming community in Eastern North Carolina in 1930, and learned to play harmonica as a child from his father. He reluctantly sold a favorite squirrel dog to purchase his first guitar. Today he is recognized as one of the last great Piedmont blues guitarists and harmonica players.



Photo by Charlotte Vaughn

Areli Garcia, Wake County

Areli is celebrating her Quinceañera celebration in Raleigh. The Quinceañera, in Latin American culture, is a coming of age ceremony with deep religious and social significance, and is held on a girl's fifteenth birthday. A growing number of people with roots in Latin America have made such ceremonies a part of North Carolina's culture as well.



Photo by Neal Hutcheson

Harry Michael Fulcher, Carteret County

Harry Michael is at his family's fish house, once the most productive fish house in Carteret County, and now derelict. Many of the families of the Outer Banks and inland areas on the sounds of North Carolina have ties to the land and the water that go back hundreds of years. While their distinctive dialects may have faded, their unique culture continues to endure.

Block Gallery 2009

Exhibitions from the Edge: ***Explorations of Place and Home***

Reflections on Home, February 5 - March 23, 2009

Artists: Luke Miller Buchanan, Mary Shannon Johnstone, Shaun Richards

Guest Curator: Lia Newman

Opening Reception featuring performance by Starmount: Thursday, February 5, 5-7 p.m.

Southern Vernacular, April 2 - May 18, 2009

Artist: Clifton Dowell

North Carolina Life and Language Project, North Carolina State University

Opening Reception honoring Piedmont Laureate Jaki Shelton Green: Thursday, April 2, 5-7 p.m.

Picturing the Fantastic, June 4 - July 27, 2009

Artists: Tisha Edwards, Leah Palmer Preiss

Opening Reception featuring dance performance: Thursday, June 4, 5-7 p.m.

Translucence, August 6 - September 21, 2009

Artists: Melissa Katherine, Ron Ward

Opening Reception featuring video installation: Thursday, August 6, 5-7 p.m.

Retrospective 25, October 1 - November 16, 2009

Celebrating 25 years of art in the Municipal Building!

Opening reception featuring live music: Thursday, October 1, 5-7 p.m.

National Arts Program, December 3, 2009 - January 11, 2010

Showcasing artwork by city of Raleigh and Wake County employees and their families in partnership with United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County.

Opening reception featuring live music: Thursday, December 3, 5-7 p.m.



Images: Clifton Dowell, *Concession Workers*; Rodney, *Wake County Speedway*, 2007

Proudly celebrating 25 years showcasing local art, the Block Gallery has introduced hundreds of artists to area residents and visitors since the inception of the program in 1984. Managed by the Raleigh Arts Commission, the gallery was dedicated in 2006 to honor community leader Miriam Preston Block. Located in downtown Raleigh at 222 West Hargett Street, the gallery is open 8:30 a.m. - 5:15 p.m., Monday through Friday. (Gallery closed on city holidays.)

Gallery information, dates and times are subject to change.

Staff

June Guralnick

Executive Director

Belva Parker

Arts Program Coordinator

Carol Mallette

Administrative Assistant

Sarah Blackmon

Block Gallery Coordinator

Marie Smith

Database Assistant